

Lamb to the Slaughter

Irony Chart The contrast between expectations and reality is referred to as **irony**. **Situational irony** occurs when events are the *opposite* of what we expected. **Dramatic irony** occurs when readers know something important that a character doesn't know. To help you appreciate the irony in "Lamb to the Slaughter," fill in the blanks in this chart.

Story Passage	How Passage Creates Irony
<p>"At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head." (lines 135–138)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mary's actions before this point in the story: _____ _____ Mary's actions now: _____ _____ What actions you expected: _____ _____ What Mary actually does: _____ _____
<p>" 'Have some more, Charlie?' " " 'No. Better not finish it.' " " 'She <i>wants</i> us to finish it. She said so. Be doing her a favor.' " (lines 353–355)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why the police think Mary wants them to finish the lamb: _____ _____ Why she really wants the police to finish the lamb: _____ _____ What is ironic about the police eating the lamb: _____ _____

TestPractice

Lamb to the Slaughter

Improve your test-taking skills by completing the sample test item below. Then, read the explanation that appears in the right-hand column.

Sample Test Item	Explanation of the Correct Answer
<p>From your knowledge of the events in “Lamb to the Slaughter,” which of the following is an example of irony?</p> <p>A Mary is a devoted wife.</p> <p>B Patrick is a police officer.</p> <p>C The grocer asks Mary whether she needs meat.</p> <p>D The investigators know both Mary and Patrick.</p>	<p>The correct answer is C.</p> <p>Irony takes place when there is a difference between what we expect to happen and what actually happens. The grocer thinks that Mary is shopping for dinner and may need meat. The truth is that Mary has just killed her husband with meat from her freezer. A, B, and D are statements of fact that do not suggest a difference between an expectation and a reality.</p>

DIRECTIONS: Circle the letter of each correct response.



Reading Standard 3.8
Interpret and evaluate the impact of ambiguities, subtleties, contradictions, ironies, and incongruities in a text.

- Which of the following shows **situational irony**?
 - Calm, loving Mary violently kills her husband.
 - The police officer goes to the grocer's.
 - Patrick is a police officer.
 - The doctor says that Patrick's skull was smashed.
- Why does Mary go shopping for groceries?
 - Her husband wants dinner at home.
 - She needs fresh air.
 - She needs an alibi, or excuse.
 - She wants to confess to Sam.
- It is an **irony** that the grieving widow is also the—
 - murderer
 - victim
 - grocer
 - investigating officer
- Dramatic irony** takes place when Mary tells the police that—
 - she would like a drink
 - they would do her a favor by eating the lamb
 - she feels too ill to leave
 - she went grocery shopping